



Meeting note

Project name	Maen Hir Solar Project
File reference	EN010156
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	16 June 2023
Meeting with	Lightsource BP
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Inception Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted (if requested by an Applicant for commercial reasons).

The Applicant

The Applicant is an international solar business, having generated some 8.4GW of energy to date, in 19 countries, including Wales. The Applicant's team consists of:

- LDA (Environmental);
- DWD/LDA (Planning);
- Pinsent Masons (Legal);
- Counter Context (Communications)
- Ardent (Land Referencing).

The Proposed Development and Site

The Applicant is proposing a solar array, with an output in excess of 350MW. The Proposed Development will include Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), a new substation (location to be confirmed) and some elements of Associated Development. A 400kv existing overhead line (OHL), from Wylfa to Pentir, passes the site, to which the

Applicant will connect; no additional OHLs are proposed. The project will also include Biodiversity Net Gain through conservation and enhancement of existing wildlife.

The Proposed Development will also include an element of community ownership, whereby profits for that element of the scheme will be shared with the community.

The array will be formed of three separate land parcels. The northern parcel includes the former Shell site at Rhosgoch. The central parcel borders Llyn Alaw and the southern parcel lies to the north of Llangefni, all within the administrative boundary of the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IoACC), in North Wales.

The land parcels do not sit within, but lie in close proximity to, Special Landscape Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar sites and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNB). There are also various scheduled ancient monuments on and in close proximity to the land parcels (including standing stones, burial mounds and historic settlements).

Engagement

The Applicant has been engaged with IoACC since March 2021. It is keen to support IoACC's aspirations of becoming an energy island and contribute to the economic growth of the area. The Applicant is seeking to promote the Welsh language and culture as part of the Proposed Development.

Stakeholder engagement will be taking place during the Summer 2023 with various key stakeholders, including community councils.

Whilst the Applicant is not proposing to hold a further round of non-statutory consultation prior to the required statutory consultation, it confirmed that engagement will be ongoing with stakeholders, land owners, community councils and MPs/MS'. As such, the community will be aware of the Proposed Development. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure that its Consultation Report clearly explains what aspects the Applicant is consulting upon at what stage, especially if there are refinements to the Proposed Development during the pre-application stage.

Surveys

Some survey work has already commenced, including ecology, landscape and visual and agricultural land classification. The Applicant confirmed that further survey work will be commencing shortly and that it is in discussion with CADW and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in relation to this matter. At present the Applicant has not encountered any difficulties in obtaining landowner agreement for access to land for surveys.

Compulsory Acquisition

The Applicant confirmed that there are some 21 landowners currently with interests in the land parcels. Heads of Terms have been agreed with each landowner and the Applicant is

seeking to secure rights voluntarily. However, the Development Consent Order may include Compulsory Acquisition powers as a fall back option. There is no Crown Land included within the Order Limits based on information currently available.

Key Dates

The Applicant gave an overview of its programme and highlighted the following key dates:

- Submission of a request for a Scoping Opinion: Mid-Late September 2023
- Statutory Consultation: Q1-Q2 2024 (for a period of some 10 weeks);
- DCO application submission: Q4 2024.

Actions

- The Inspectorate will look for suitable dates for a meeting in early September, ahead of the submission of the Scoping Request; (**Post Meeting Note:** we have the following dates available):
 - Monday 4 September 2023 (10:00-11:00);
 - Tuesday 5 September 2023 (10:00-11:00);
 - Thursday 7 September 2023 (09:30-10:30).
- The Applicant should provide the Inspectorate with the relevant project information in order to prepare a project page for the Inspectorate's website.